

What to blog about

You should start a blog. Having your own little corner of the internet is good for the soul!

But what should you write about?

It's easy to get hung up on this. I've definitely felt the self-imposed pressure to only write something if it's new, and unique, and feels like it's never been said before. This is a mental trap that does nothing but hold you back.

Here are two types of content that I guarantee you can produce and feel great about producing: TILs, and writing descriptions of your projects.

Today I Learned

A TIL—Today I Learned—is the most liberating form of content I know of.

Did you just learn how to do something? Write about that.

Call it a TIL—that way you're not promising anyone a revelation or an in-depth tutorial. You're saying "I just figured this out: here are my notes, you may find them useful too".

I also like the humility of this kind of content. Part of the reason I publish them is to emphasize that even with 25 years of professional experience you should still celebrate learning even the most basic of things.

I learned the "interact" command in `pdb` the other day! [Here's my TIL](#).

I started publishing TILs [in April 2020](#). I'm up to 346 now, and most of them took less than 10 minutes to write. It's such a great format for quick and satisfying online writing.

My collection lives at <https://til.simonwillison.net>—which publishes content from my [simonw/til](#) GitHub repository.

Write about your projects

If you do a project, you should write about it.

I recommend adding "write about it" to your definition of "done" for anything that you build or create.

Like with TILs, this takes away the pressure to be unique. It doesn't matter if your project overlaps with thousands of others: the experience of building it is unique to you. You deserve to have a few paragraphs and a screenshot out there explaining (and quietly celebrating) what you made.

The screenshot is particularly important. Will your project still exist and work in a decade? I hope so, but we all now how quickly things succumb to bit-rot.

Even better than a screenshot: an animated GIF screenshot! I capture these with [LICEcap](#). And a video is even better than that, but those take a lot more effort to produce.

It's *incredibly* tempting to skip the step where you write about a project. But any time you do that you're leaving a huge amount of uncaptured value from that project on the table.

These days I make myself do it: I tell myself that writing about something is the cost I have to pay for building it. And I *a/ways* end up feeling that the effort was more than worthwhile.

Check out my [projects tag](#) for examples of this kind of content.

So that's my advice for blogging: **write about things you've learned, and write about things you've built!**

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writing ¹⁵

blogging ³¹

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